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Human Rights protection for First Nations overdue: Commission

Ottawa - January 28, 2003 - The Canadian Human Rights Commission supports the proposed repeal of section 67 of the Canadian Human Rights Act. "The Commission welcomes this change," stated Chief Commissioner Mary Gusella, appearing before the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources, on Bill C-7, the First Nations Governance Act. "Since Parliament passed the Canadian Human Rights Act in 1977 some Canadians, namely First Nations people living on reserves, have not had full access to the human rights complaint system," the Chief Commissioner told the Standing Committee

Bill C-7 proposes to remove section 67 of the Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA), which currently severely limits the Commission's ability to deal with complaints from First Nations peoples. Removing section 67 of the CHRA would allow First Nations people full access, for the first time, to file complaints of discrimination if they believe that the CHRA has been violated. This legislative change will help improve the lives of First Nations people and their communities.

The Commission looks forward to working with First Nations organizations, Parliamentarians and the Minister of Indian Affairs to ensure fair access to the human rights complaints process for First Nations people.

See also: Submission of the CHRC to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources

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